

<p style="text-align: center;">London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham</p> <p style="text-align: center;">COMMUNITY SAFETY, ENVIRONMENT AND RESIDENTS SERVICES POLICY & ACCOUNTABILITY COMMITTEE</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1st March 2017</p>	
<p>Update on Registration Services</p>	
<p>Report of the Director for Safer Neighbourhoods</p>	
<p>Open Report</p>	
<p>Classification - For Policy & Accountability Committee Review and Comment Key Decision: No</p>	
<p>Wards Affected: All</p>	
<p>Accountable Executive Director: David Page, Director for Safer Neighbourhoods</p>	
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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. The Registration Service has undergone a significant restructure and review. A number of new staff have been recruited, including two new service managers.
- 1.2. The service is showing a much improved performance against income targets this financial year compared to last year's outturn. However, income is still lower than targets set in 2013 as Citizenship Ceremonies and Nationality Checking Service have seen a sharp decrease over the last three years.
- 1.3. Several new initiatives and venues have been offered in the last year to provide a better service for customers and increase income for the Council.
- 1.4. The Hammersmith Town Hall refurbishment programme poses a significant financial risk to the service.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1. For the Committee to note the contents of this report and provide any comment on its contents.

3. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 3.1. In 2014 a full service review and reorganisation was initiated to improve the culture, performance and service provided to residents. The final stages of this review were implemented in December 2016 with final recruitment and bespoke training of staff.
- 3.2. The review looked at service delivery and how this could be improved to customers. This led to a skills review as officers were limited in their capacity to provide varied roles and concentrated on one aspect of registration. The impact of the limited skills meant in any period of leave or sickness the service suffered through lack of resilience.
- 3.3. Officers retained under the reorganisation have been trained across all disciplines of the service: births, marriages, and death registration and the Nationality Checking Service. New officers who have joined the service have been trained in all areas and work on a rotational basis to gain experience across all these services.
- 3.4. A comprehensive review of our charging structure for ceremonies and other services provided by the registrars highlighted we were charging well below comparable authorities. This also provided an opportunity to offer new services and new venues for weddings and ceremonies.
- 3.5. Since September 2016 we have licenced the Mayor's Foyer to hold wedding and civil partnership ceremonies. The venue has proved to be popular due to its unique décor and size. We recently increased the licence to hold up to 150 guests following a request from a customer.
- 3.6. The service introduced a birth registration at the Masbro Centre in June 2016. The service is for babies born in borough and their parents must also live here. There have been 25 appointments so far.
- 3.7. The service has increased income from £464,413 in 2015/16 to a projected £532,504 for 2016/17. This is a culmination of the review and improvements in service over the last 12 months.

4. PROPOSAL AND ISSUES

- 4.1. Initial discussions with the Events Team have begun to look at a joined up offer of wedding and ceremony packages to maximise the offer to customers. The Assembly Hall and Playfair Room are a popular venue for events and parties. We hope to offer these as part of a wider package when customers ask about using Hammersmith Town Hall as a wedding or civil partnership venue.
- 4.2. Due to the popularity and size of the Mayor's Foyer we intend to review the pricing structure of this room for 2017/18. It is currently listed as part of Hammersmith Town Hall with other smaller rooms which have significantly lower

capacity. A review of other Council's venues has shown that this is the largest capacity in West London and no others have the impact of this room.

- 4.3. We aim to increase the number of licensed venues in borough over the next year to increase the offer to customers and provide a wider range of venues. At the same time, we are training more staff to be able to provide this service as it is currently limited to only a few officers.
- 4.4. The Hammersmith Town Hall refurbishment will provide opportunities to improve the look of the Registration Offices and increase storage for equipment, such as chairs and tables for weddings. However, it also poses significant financial risks which are detailed below in the *financial and resources implications*.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1. None.

6. FINANCIAL AND RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1. The Hammersmith Town Hall refurbishment programme may have significant impact on the service and the ability for us to generate income. The dates of the project are currently unknown and we continue to book services. Once refurbishment work on the Town Hall begin this may affect our ability to hold some services, depending on the scope of work and which parts of the building are to be refurbished.
- 6.2. The project team have been made aware of the issues faced by the Registration Service and we are working closely with them to mitigate any reduction in service and income.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2000 **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS USED IN PREPARING THIS REPORT**

No.	Description of Background Papers	Name/Ext of holder of file/copy	Department/ Location
	None.		